

Into the Peril

an erotic roleplaying game
for two players
and no GM

Into the Peril is an erotic RPG for two players. Rather than designate one player as the game manager, or GM, Into the Peril uses a simple system to share roleplay and narration between both players evenly. This means both players can play as their desired Main Character, or MC, while also giving the other player obstacles and adversity in the form of Adversity Characters, or ACs, for the protagonists to overcome (or succumb to).

First, an example of a simple dice-roll for resolving a conflict: Alice is playing as Ardella, and Ardella is currently having a bad day. Betty is currently narrating most of that badness, which now includes a low animal growling sound from the shadows.

<Alice> I'm going to Run from that! Any Dangers I should know about?

<Betty> No, not just yet~ <3

Alice rolls two six-sided dice and shows their values, a 3 and a 5.

<Alice> Hmm, I really don't want to find out what that thing is, so 5 goes into the Goal and I get away-- so the 3 has to go to the Danger. I don't have anything I can lose, and I don't feel like getting stuck anywhere, so I guess injured?

<Betty> Sounds good! You Run off from that noise and out into the well-lit open area--but it feels like you sprained your ankle there, maybe it's just a strain, but it might get worse . . .

<Alice> Great, I'll have to put that maybe-sprain on my next roll, I guess.

<Betty> You know it could be worse! You can get your payback soon, it'll be your turn to narrate before long.

So, a prompt for a Main Character to take action, establishing the stakes of both success and complication, including *Alice* having a say on what kind of complication can result, letting her influence failure and hardship on her own terms, while still *inflicting* them without Alice fully controlling when or how. And while Betty can present ruthless adversity to Ardella, she can wash her hands of responsibility for Alice's choices in how to face it.

Most of the time, rolling dice is as simple as this, and "when to roll dice" comprises about nine tenths of the rules, including when not to roll dice. The other tenth of the rules provides some additional systems for health, corruption, and more complex situations than just running away or fighting or talking your way past something.

Glossary

To explain how rolls work, some terminology:

- **Main Character, or MC:** one of the two protagonists of your story, the main character played by one of the two players.
- **Adversity Character, or AC:** a character (or template) intended to give adversity, challenge, and peril to an MC, explained in detail later.
- **Side character:** any other character.
- **Actions:** risky or uncertain things your character does in the world. There's a small list (with a few optional items). Any time your character does something that fits the definition of a given Action, then they're making that Action and you should roll for it.
- **Goal:** part of every Action. Every Action has one stated Goal, usually one of a small list the Action names as part of its purview. The Goal of an Action can fail, muddle along, or succeed, depending on what value you assign to it when rolling.
- **Danger:** part of every Action. Every Action has at least one Danger, but may have more (more detail to come). The Danger of an Action can come true entirely, wait unresolved or partly come true, or completely pass by without a hitch. Just like Goals, the outcome of the Danger depends on what value you assign when rolling.
- **Edges:** are not part of any Action *by default*, but instead are applied by the player making the Action, when they want to and consider it appropriate. Edges work identically to Dangers, except where Dangers hinder you, Edges help, since you can safely assign low value to an Edge.
- **Twists:** not part of all Actions, but may become a part of a specific Action for a given character as the game progresses. Twists represent a kind of Danger your character normally would never worry about, but due to trauma, transformation, or other events, now has to cope with in addition to normal Dangers.
- **Factors:** all the parts of a roll for an Action: the Goal, Danger/s, Edge/s, and Twist/s. When not clearly used generically to mean 'contributing circumstances or details', 'Factor' means anything you could assign a die to within a roll.
- **Challenges:** unusual Actions. Your character may suffer serious trauma, transformation, or other events, which turn normal, easy, automatic tasks into Actions your character would never normally have to roll for, but must roll for now.
- **Powers:** special Actions. Just as Challenges represent your character being debilitated (but still alive and playable), Powers represent your character having or gaining the ability to do (or at least try) things they could never have tried otherwise.

Dice in Brief

So to bring it together: most of what your Main Characters do within the rules will be Actions.

Every Action has one (1) Goal, saying whether you succeed or fail, regardless of any other factor.

Every Action has *at least* one Danger, but potentially more. Each Danger describes a cost, complication, or risk that can happen or not, regardless of whether you succeed or fail, and regardless of any other Danger.

To roll for an Action, just roll some six-sided dice, one for the Goal, and one for each Danger that applies. Then pick which die goes to the Goal and Danger/s, to determine success and any complications.

Dice in Detail

In broad terms, a die showing 1-2 is "bad news". A die showing 3-4 is "unfinished business", and might affect or require future rolls. A die showing 5-6 is "good news", representing success or going unscathed. Here's what the dice mean in particular:

Goals: your success or failure at an Action, ignoring any complications or help.

- 1-2 means complete failure at the Action, and you can't try the same Action again unless circumstances or stakes somehow change (so no trying to pick the same lock until the dice smile on you).
- 3-4 means partial success or headway, and you still have an opportunity to succeed at this Action. You may only need to describe more effort or risk in in-character terms, or you may need to make another Action to seal it.
- 5-6 means complete success. Regardless of all other Factors, no matter what Danger or Twist comes up, you get the full result of succeeding at this Action.

Dangers: every Action has one built-in Danger, and a given roll might include extra Dangers.

- 1-2 means the Danger in question happens in full effect. You don't have to roll for it again.
- 3-4 means the Danger threatens to come true, but hasn't yet! You have to roll for it on any future Action until the end of the scene or until someone or something else resolves this Danger.
- 5-6 means the Danger doesn't happen at all, and you don't need to roll for it on future Actions (unless you make the same Action again, which would invoke the same Danger all over again).

Edges: unique traits or temporary benefits that can help in some situations.

- 1-2 means your Edge takes its effect, helping you out, but you can't roll for it on future Actions. Some Edges are temporary, and a 1-2 means the Edge is completely played out. If you have a permanent Edge, a 1-2 means you can't use that Edge for the rest of the scene.
- 3-4 means your Edge shows some effect, but isn't exhausted, and you can use it on future Actions.
- 5-6 means that in spite of having your Edge ready, you hold back from using it, and you can use it on future Actions, or not if you prefer. Since Edges mostly exist to absorb low-value dice, this only matters if you don't have any low-value dice you want to absorb.

Twists: special Dangers that haunt your character and complicate life in unique ways.

- 1-2 means the Twist rears its head, and whether you succeed or escape other Dangers, you have to deal with the effect of your Twist.
- 3-4 means the Twist threatens to take effect, and you can likely sense the risk, but you can soldier through it (for now).
- 5-6 means the Twist lies dormant or doesn't take effect this time. You will still have to roll for it on applicable Actions, until you can get rid of the Twist on your character.

Powers and Challenges: as already stated, these are unusual or custom Actions, but should always include a Goal and one built-in Danger. They follow the above rules for dice in every case and circumstance.

So to break down that starting example dice-roll: Alice had her Main Character, Ardella, Run from a threat. Run has a Goal of pursuing or fleeing something (which is what Ardella was doing in-character), and a Danger that includes getting injured or hurt (which Alice chose to risk).

Alice rolled two dice and got a 3 and a 5. She assigned the 5 to her Goal of getting away and outrunning the threat, and put the 3 to the Danger of injury. 5 is success, so Ardella escapes, and 3 is lingering risk, so Ardella has a strained ankle that *might* be sprained, an injury that could be trivial or could worsen, depending on future Actions (which will include Ardella's hurting ankle, if applicable).

Narration Duties

Into the Peril uses a system to alternate which player has narrative, game-managing duties during scenes, to make sure neither player has to wait too long before having their *own* protagonist in the spotlight facing erotic peril. This system works fairly simply, based on players' dice-rolls.

Every time a player rolls for an Action and places a 1-2 into the Goal or any Danger, that player receives a GM Point. At three GM Points, the player clears all their GM Points, and should resolve their current scene as soon as possible, and take up narration duty for the other player, playing antagonists and adversity against the other player's MC.

In the example above, Ardella escaped from the threat without any 1-2 dice showing up, so Alice, the player, didn't receive any GM Points. However, her future Actions will pretty quickly give her GM Points, and she will take over narration duties so that Betty can focus on playing her character, Belial.

<Betty> You *could sneak* behind the counter while the bartender is busy, and try to snatch that Worm Liqueur. You know, if you really want to--but I'd add a Danger for a patron seeing and wanting a share off you.

<Alice> I *do* want that classy Worm Liqueur--alright, here goes!

Alice rolls three dice, getting a 5, 1, and 4.

<Betty> Oh, and there's a 1, that makes three GM Points if you don't have any Edge you wanna add.

<Alice> Hm, not just now, no. I'll put the 4 in the Goal, and also describe how Ardella crouches down *real* low, incidentally putting her goods on display for that onlooker. 5 in the main Danger so that's fine, and 1, oh no, I have to share some of this Worm Liqueur, I hope they don't take advantage of me!

<Betty> Groovy, after that, we cut over to Belial who's trying to make her way down to the exclusive basement room~ <3

Both players can play their respective MC in a scene, regardless of which player currently has narration duties. As long as the player who *does* have narration duties actually narrates the environment, scenery, side characters, and especially the Adversity Characters opposing the other, non-narrating player, all is well.

However, when Betty describes Belial trying to *Persuade* her way into that exclusive room, that's an Action and Betty has to roll for it. And just as ever, if she places a 1-2 into the Goal or any Dangers, she gets a GM Point. Betty will have already cleared her GM Points out when taking up narration duties, but every Action she has Belial take can earn further GM Points, and shorten her own time before taking up narration duties again.

By the same token, Alice can remove one GM Point if she takes over narrating an Adversity Character opposing *Belial* during a scene, allowing Betty to focus on Belial's reactions and distress. Betty still has nominal narration duties, but if Alice temporarily takes over when narratively required, her reward is to remove a GM Point. Players may only remove one GM Point per scene in this manner. Adversity Characters receive full explanation later, for now just know that they represent the things that hinder or harm Main Characters.

Actions

As stated earlier, [Into the Peril](#) uses a small list of Actions, and these are the only times you need to roll dice. They represent moments of risk and uncertainty, times when your character does something and could fail.

- **Attack**: when you try to injure or damage people or things, use violence to get your way, even using threats and intimidation against someone to coerce them. The Goal is breaking or destroying your target (or target's resolve against you). The Danger is suffering injury yourself, causing unwanted damage, or attracting attention you didn't want.
- **Run**: when you try to catch someone or something, escape someone or something, or more generally whenever you use raw speed, such as "grab the weapon before they do". The Goal is getting your quarry or item or getting to safety and getting it first. The Danger is losing something important, getting stuck or trapped, or injuring yourself as you rush.
- **Sneak**: when you move stealthily, tuck something up your sleeve, communicate with only silent gestures, or otherwise try to keep something else from knowing what you're doing. The Goal is keeping something hidden from someone or something. The Danger is having to lose or leave something, getting stuck in hiding, or leaving traces to be found later.
- **Persuade**: when you use wits, charm, lies, or bribery to get what you want. The Goal is to entice someone else into believing or doing something they normally wouldn't. The Danger is they may demand a bribe or payment, or they may react differently to your persuasion from what you expect.
- **Pry**: when you peer, prod, cup your ear or lean around a corner, or ask innocuous questions hoping for a payoff. The Goal is to snoop or interrogate, observing details, rifling through things, and asking sneaky questions. The Danger is revealing your interest or the reason for it, or uncovering a secret you are not ready for.
- **Endure**: when you grit your teeth or plant your feet to withstand physical shock, pain, injury, drugs, toxins, or adverse environments. The Goal is to remain upright and perform some simple task that would not otherwise require an Action. The Danger is being incapacitated (during or after), or suffering some lasting adverse effect.
- **Brace**: when you shake your head, clear your mind, and steel your will against mental shock, trauma, fatigue, drugs, conditioning, or psychic effects. The Goal is to remain focused and motivated while doing some other task that would not normally require an Action. The Danger is giving into the compulsion or effect (during or after), or needing mental recovery later.
- **Focus**: when you control your breath, steady your hand, and attempt a fraught or complicated task, while under pressure or in jeopardy, or to help someone else in jeopardy, if no other Action quite applies. The Goal is to do the fraught or complicated task for which no other Action applies. The Danger is whichever pressure or threat causes the task to be fraught or perilous.

The following are elective Actions: your character gets two for the game, and does not get the other two.

- **Command**: you have friends, lackeys, subordinates, drones or a pet, someone or something that generally does what you ask on your behalf. The Danger is your mooks doing something on their own in addition to your orders (or instead of, if your Goal fails).
- **Craft**: build new things, or repair or repurpose old ones, including giving an Edge to a device or item. The Danger is a defect or other problem in the finished product, such as "very noisy" or "occasional shocks".
- **Research**: apply your lore, studies, or expertise to a problem. You might already know or have a key fact relevant to the situation, or you could study or inspect the situation and draw a conclusion, but in all cases, research is a way to learn the true answer to any question if you succeed (including an Edge for the situation). The Danger is revealing a dangerous downside, or missing a crucial detail that appears after you use your knowledge.
- **Power**: you have a supernatural or superhuman ability that others don't possess. Examples include things like healing or bestowing blessings or curses, machine control, transformation, teleportation, or anything that an Action cannot cover at all. For abilities that normal Actions *can* cover (such as superhuman strength or uncanny senses), see Edges.

Powers always follow the template of existing Actions: something that the character does, which can potentially fail or go awry (the Goal), and with a risk of cost or complication that can occur whether the Power accomplishes its purpose or not (the Danger). A good default Danger is "the character can't use their Power until they Craft or Research or simply rest some period of time". See [Example Powers](#) for some examples and guidance on creating your own.

Edges

As stated earlier, Edges represent unique traits or abilities that help with *normal* Actions. A good Edge should apply to a variety of different Actions, or potentially any Action during some limited, defining circumstances. Most anything can be an Edge, as long as it doesn't represent something completely unrelated to the Goals and Dangers of your existing Actions.

Mechanically, Edges simply give you an additional die to roll on an Action. This lets you place a 1-2 result into the Edge, exhausting it, but leaving higher values for your Goal or any Dangers. This also spares you from accruing a GM Point, since an Edge is *not* a Goal or a Danger. The Edges you choose at this stage creating your Main Character are permanent Edges: they're defining traits of your character, and when you exhaust one of these Edges, it returns at the end of the scene.

Choose or create four Edges for your character, abilities or traits that make them competent and unique, or at least worth protagonist status in your story. As a few examples:

- Preternatural strength: you can Attack, Run, and Endure with better effect.
- Telepathy: you can more effectively or safely Persuade, Sneak, Run, and Pry when you can read another's mind.
- Divine light: radiance shines from a higher power when you Attack, Persuade, Brace, or Focus.
- Charming looks: uncommon beauty helps you Persuade, Pry, or Attack anyone who can perceive it.
- Flawless memory: whenever you Run or Sneak someplace you've been before, or take any other Action where a remembered fact might help, it helps.
- Ascetic training: years of honing your mind give you an Edge when you Focus or Brace, or when you Pry in any matter tangential to your tradition.

Notice the range of 'power' represented: having good concentration has as much of an effect on the dice you roll as having superhuman strength. For the purposes of your story, anything that defines your character matters as much as anything else. However, if you want to reflect the differing weight of 'superhuman strength' versus 'good concentration', consider that your character with superhuman strength may rightly not *need* to Attack in order to break off a doorknob, or might not have to Endure a 'mere' punch in the face. Your Edges represent facts about your character, and those facts matter even when you don't use them as a die to roll in an Action.

As to actual *Powers*, as granted by the *Power* elective Action, some overlap exists between traits or abilities best served by an Edge, and those best reflected with a Power. To explain the difference simply:

A Power gives you a completely new Action, which has a Goal and Danger that differ from any other Action you would otherwise have. For example, no Action would let you summon a thunderstorm, specifically. By summoning a thunderstorm, you might *also* harm others, or escape, or intimidate people, but summoning a thunderstorm counts as its own Goal, and doubtless presents a Danger no other Action has.

An Edge gives you better success or safety at one or more Actions you already have, without giving a qualitatively different Goal or Danger for trying them. For example, instead of summoning a thunderstorm, you might have a 'dramatic wind' that makes you look more intimidating when you **Attack**, lets you **Run** faster, **Pry** for scents (or anything that might flutter into view), or **Sneak** with your sounds masked by a sudden gust. All of these Actions use their normal Goal and Danger, but your Edge for 'dramatic wind' makes those Actions more effective, as well as less likely to accrue a GM Point.

You can most easily determine whether some unusual ability works best as an Edge or a Power by asking whether using the ability at all constitutes something you could *fail* at by itself and have the failure matter. You could fail to conjure a thunderstorm, and it would matter. However if you failed to invoke a 'dramatic wind', likely no one would notice. Ask whether the ability by itself carries any unique risk, cost, or complication to using it. If so, it definitely should constitute a Power. If not, it likely would work fine as an Edge. A thunderstorm can cause floods and lightning and widespread disruption, and conjuring weather might drain your mind or spiritual energy or draw the wrath of patron weather deities you obey. A 'dramatic wind' would do none of these.

You can create new, temporary Edges through Actions, by simply stating your Goal with the Action, and that you intend to reflect the result as an Edge to a later Action. These temporary Edges should usually expire at the end of a scene, and don't return once you place a 1-2 in them on an Action, but they can help on complicated sequences of Actions, and can reflect more nuanced activities than the usual Actions intend. As a small set of examples:

- **Attack** a heavy bookcase to shove it over as a barricade, as an **Edge** to **Endure** bracing against a door before something can beat it down.
- **Run** (climb) quickly to the top of a building, to get an **Edge** of a high vantage to **Pry** on a besieging battalion of troops.
- **Sneak** a pebble behind the hinge of a door, giving you an **Edge** to **Run** when the chamber should be locked.
- **Persuade** someone that you're harmless and unarmed, just before you **Attack**.
- **Pry** at someone's secrets, to gain an **Edge** to **Persuade** them later.
- **Endure** the blistering desert sun so that you can **Focus** on careful stitches with full noonday light.
- **Brace** against the tickle of spiders on your neck, crawling through a passage no one could have expected you to **Sneak** through.
- **Focus** on carefully boiling and mixing ingredients for an elixir that will let you **Brace** against any kind of shock.

So long as the player describes how their Action creates an Edge that can help them in the future, any Action can provide an Edge, and as long as the player gives some narrative justification, any such Edge can benefit any Action. In particular, placing a 1-2 into temporary Edges like these does not give the player a GM Point, though the Edge generally shouldn't last long, or restore after use, unlike permanent Edges innate to a Main Character.

Finally, you may apply any fitting Edge to an Action *after* rolling all other dice, if you find the results unfavorable. Leave the other dice as they lie, but roll an additional die for the Edge you choose to add, and then assign the dice as normal among Goals, Danger/s, and the Edge.

Creating a Character

To make an MC, pick any two of the preceeding elective Actions, and come up with four permanent Edges. If you choose to have a Power as one of your Actions, see the [Example Powers](#) for guidance. Don't worry if both players' MCs have some amount of overlap, or if there's a field that neither MC has aptitude in. You and the other player control the story, so you can decide exactly what kinds of challenges to face the MCs with.

Decide together which Adversity Characters interest you both, and feel free to make adjustments to the wording or nature of any Actions, especially ACs' Actions. As antagonists, the nature of their opposition will greatly affect the tone and events of your story.

When you're ready, decide which player will start establishing a scene, location, and the immediate plan of the MCs. Take turns as seems appropriate, and always declare if you're making an Action, whether as your own MC, or as an AC you play against the other player. Especially make sure to declare if you add any Dangers onto the other player's Action, or add a suitable Edge onto your own.

Note that you can roleplay and portray your own MC (including Actions) during your turn narrating and playing ACs against the other player. Your turn as narrator means that you should focus on the other player's MC and on providing them with adversity through ACs, but your own MC still exists, and indeed should usually be present in the same scenes, albeit with less narrative focus during your narration turn.

For some more sample Edges you can choose from, if you don't have an idea of your own, try any of the following:

Religious Faith	Widely-Traveled	Influential Friends
Always a Plan	Contagious Curse	Steel Hands
Piercing Insight	Noble Station	Cruel Creations
Survival Instinct	Undying Mission	Blueskin Luck

In addition to giving your character a set of skills or talents to rely on, use these Edges to help *characterize* your character. Whatever a Blueskin is, they must have a particular *kind* of luck, if it's peculiar to Blueskins. How did you end up with such a strong Survival Instinct? And your Contagious Curse is an Edge, not something actually harmful to you--so what form does it take, how did you get it, do you intend to rid yourself of it? Write these topics down on your character sheet, as topics for your Main Character to worry about, hope for, or obsess over, when nothing more obvious presents itself.

General Guidance

Whether you narrate your own MC, or an AC opposing the other player's MC, each piece of narration should include a forward-moving event, whether a proper Action, a (little-a) action, or even a change or incident in the environment at large. The following examples show ways that an MC might interact *without* such a forward-moving event, each listing corrections that include such a forward-moving event, whether as an MC Action, an AC Action, or even the *lack* of a relevant Action.

- I look for secret doors
 - I find one and go through it
 - I can't find one, so I'm cornered here
- I attack it
 - I injure it / I drive it away
 - My attack is blocked or thwarted
 - It strikes and injures me instead
- I look for my Goal
 - I find it
 - I come nearer to it
 - I can't find it
 - Something distracts me
- I smile at her
 - ...and I seize her
 - ...and I kneel before her
 - ...and I boldly praise her beauty
 - ...and I pull her up and away from the chasm's edge
- I run
 - I get away
 - I am pursued all the harder
 - The chase enters more dangerous territory
 - I'm caught

These forward-moving events include responses, such as whether the Dire Creature grunts with pain or seems to ignore a wound, or how a side character reacts verbally and emotionally. They also include physical consequences, such as whether you easily fend off a blow and press forward, as opposed to being slammed into the canyon, tumbling over and over, but eventually rising and struggling on to challenge the foe again.

In addition to adding color and personality to MCs and the world around them, these forward-moving events give the other player something evocative to respond to, and to incorporate into their own narration as they take their own turn, and eventually as they take over narration duties.

It bears repeating, each of these improved, forward-moving choices can relate to an Action or *lack* of a listed Action, whether for an MC or an AC. If you find that your MC doesn't have an answer or reply to a given situation, and neither does the AC opposing them, describe this impasse in the narration, and have the other player propose something to break the stalemate or stagnancy, so that your story can proceed to exciting events.

As a basic rule, if you find yourself at a loss for what to do with your MC or an AC you control, then make one of the Actions. For MCs, your Edges can give good ideas for what your character would pay attention to, or bring up with others, or kinds of situations they would look for, as well as stumble into. For ACs, the Normal Actions especially support interacting with the world, without any specific agenda or goal. Likewise, prompt the other player to make Actions, so that you give yourself and the other player events to react to in the story. In short, both players should make and provoke Actions whenever you don't have something specific to do.

When narrating, and the other player succeeds at an Action, make sure to describe its effects in full, especially in terms of how their cool, competent, interesting MC has solved a problem in a cool, competent, and interesting way. Likewise, when the other player fails at an Action, describe how terrible, complicating, and (erotically) disempowering it is, to give the other player the most enjoyable time as they're hurt or defeated. When you narrate, you have the job of making the other player's MC the star, for good and ill, so always narrate these dramatic turns with detail, and with faithfulness for the MC's protagonist status. The MCs' Actions should always drive the story and lead to interesting consequences.

For trinkets, gadgets, equipment, and tools, you can assume your MC has whatever someone of their calling or career might have on hand. A savvy adventuring thief probably has lockpicks, rope, a tinderbox, and other oddments in preparation for an adventure. Conversely, a scholarly princess caught completely off-guard might have nothing but the clothes on their back. If you ever have any doubt, just assume your character has what they need in order to do something exciting and interesting, rather than rummage around for a hammer.

As to health and injury, no rules exist for MC death. Your MC dies when you consider it a satisfying moment for your MC to die. *Other* characters die when an MC or AC Action suggests they should, such as the Dire Creature's "suddenly claim a side character and do with them as you like", or an MC **Attacking** successfully with deadly intent.

Other than death, statuses (such as [feverish]) exist as roleplay prompts and guidance. Some ACs refer to statuses in general terms, to pace the availability of some powerful Strong Actions, but other than this, simply take statuses on your MC's health as suggesting how to play the character: if your MC is [shamed], they probably shouldn't boast about sexual conquests, or if [feverish], **Bracing** against adverse environments might include any environment at all.

Adversity Characters

Mentioned in Narration Duties, Adversity Characters provide the foundational way to give opposition, hardship, and conflict to your MCs. You should modify them to taste, so that they work in context, but these should give a good selection of useful templates.

All ACs share a common structure:

- **Strong Actions:** these prompt for MC Actions, listing the plausible, likely, or intended Actions that the player should make in response. When narrating the AC at the other player, they can propose any Action if context makes it a sensible approach, but they should likely start with the Actions in the AC's Strong Action.
- **Normal Actions:** these list things that the AC should do on a regular basis, lacking any more specific aim or intention. They also suggest Dangers to elaborate on and apply to MC Actions. Normal Actions characterize ACs and help give depth and interest to scenes, without escalating stakes or provoking Actions directly.
- **Weak Actions:** these list things an MC can get by taking Actions, if they choose to. For example, the Anonymous Nightclub can "provide a damning secret", if the MC chooses to **Pry**, **Persuade**, or **Attack** for it. When narrating an AC, you can always choose to simply *give* one of these benefits without any Action from the MC, however you should *always* allow the other player to pursue one of these Weak Action benefits unless you provide a very compelling reason that it wouldn't narratively make sense.

A number of ACs impose statuses on MCs, denoted in [brackets]. Unless expressly referenced by an AC (for example, 'an MC with two statuses'), these statuses have no explicit meaning within the rules. However, you should consider them strong roleplay prompts and suggestions. For example, a character with the status [shamed] should likely not boast about their sexual adventures.

In the absence of any rule-based method to remove statuses, you can consider them expired if they no longer have relevance to the scene or ongoing events. In particular, if both players forget about a status, it has probably expired.

With both MCs often traveling together and facing the same adversity, often an AC will have reason to act against both MCs at once. Using Alice and Betty as examples again:

<Alice> This time, that low growling sound doesn't simply wait in the shadows. You see a pair of yellow gleaming beads, and a mottled blur springs into view!
<Betty> Belial ducks back and draws her dagger--uh, so what does Ardella do? Just run off or something?
<Alice> No, she's right there with you, uh--the creature pounces for Belial first, and I'll pick Ardella's Action based on that. We'll say she was more off-guard than Belial, so good thing the creature pounced Belial first huh?
<Betty> Since she's the one who can heal, kinda! After that, I can take over if you want Ardella to get chewed on a bit. That'll take off a GM Point from me, right?
<Alice> Yep, since it means you GMing for a bit! And sure, sounds like fun.

Mechanically, the rules do not make any distinction for this event: whether Alice or Betty narrates the creature, both will roll Actions in the same way, and both will accrue GM Points if they have to place a 1-2 die into a Goal or Danger. Alice can describe the outcome after rolling for Ardella's Action, or Betty can take over immediately, depending on which has the most compelling feel to narrate.

As a reminder of Narration Duties, the player currently focusing on their own MC can remove one GM Point, if they take up narrating an AC opposing the other player. If Betty takes over describing and portraying the creature, in opposition to Ardella, giving Ardella time to play her character and enjoy some hardship, then Betty can remove a GM Point at the end of the scene, when Alice resumes her previous narration duties. This allows for more fluid shifts of narrative control, as needed, while still providing a reliable means of alternation.

The Anonymous Nightclub

- + Distract or block an MC from fully exiting.
 - Sneak, Persuade, Attack.
- + Face an MC with an illicit vice (status [intoxicated] or appropriate), or disdain for refusing (status [scorned]).
 - Brace (against the persuasion or the drug), impose Dangers.
- + Separate an MC from anyone supportive or protective.
 - Sneak, Pry, Brace.
- + Trap an [intoxicated] character with predatory parties.
 - Brace, Endure, Attack, Run.
- + Trap a [scorned] character with demeaning, demanding, obstructive gatekeepers.
 - Brace, Persuade, Sneak, Attack.
- + Display an MC in the midst of something humiliating or incriminating (status [exposed]).
 - Brace, Sneak, Persuade.
- + Face an [exposed] character with a future obligation.
 - Persuade, Attack, Pry, Sneak.
- Entice an MC to revelry and abandon.
- Afflict a side character with any status at all.
- Circulate tantalizing rumors.
- Show scenes of excess and hedonism, just barely in view.
- Show appraising, impetuous, or aggressive desire for an MC.
- Show uncaring, distrustful, or mocking disinterest in an MC.
- Provide a damning secret that an MC can use.
 - Pry, Persuade, Attack.
- Give an opportunity for a coveted vice that an MC can trade or barter later.
 - Persuade, Sneak, Brace (if the vice is one the MC craves).
- Grant audience with someone powerful and influential.
 - Persuade, Pry, Sneak.
- Start or improve an MC's reputation in the club's social stratum.
 - Persuade, Pry.

Note: the Anonymous Nightclub can be seedy, luxurious, or simply niche, its main features are that a different social hierarchy presides over a different set of social norms, and metes out access and punishment over different resources, than the prevailing outside culture.

Most uses of Attack should likely be as intimidation, or possibly verbal or emotional abuse, rather than physical harm. That doesn't *preclude* physical violence, but the Anonymous Nightclub is not a brawling pit by default.

The City Guard

- + Detain an MC in the dungeon until someone releases them (or they escape).
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, Endure.
- + Put an MC in a pillory in the square for a day.
 - Brace, Endure, Persuade.
- + Detain someone an MC cherishes.
 - Persuade, Sneak, Run.
- + Demand an exorbitant bribe, payoff, or service (status [destitute], [humiliated], or similar).
 - Persuade, Pry, Brace, Attack.
- + Declare a bounty on an MC (status [bounty]).
 - Sneak, Persuade, Run.
- + Announce an MC as guilty of treason, blasphemy, or another heinous crime (status [traitor] or similar).
 - Sneak, Persuade, Run.
- + Confiscate an MC's clothing and belongings (status [stripped]).
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, Brace.
- Ask around about an MC or their goal, respectfully or menacingly.
- Declare a danger posed by a recent event, in or near the City.
- Declare interest in a side character, they are wanted for aid, questioning, or punishment.
- Allow an MC to slip away.
 - Run, Sneak, Persuade.
- Fail to protect an important something, -one, or -where from an MC.
 - Sneak, Pry, Attack.
- Entreat an MC for help, with a good reward.
 - Persuade, Pry.
- Accept a paltry bribe or service for a favor or lenience.
 - Persuade, Pry, Attack.
- Carelessly give up some vital piece of information.
 - Pry, apply an Edge to some later Action.

Note: the City Guard has the most ambivalent relationship to MCs, as it doesn't *inherently* have assumed hostility, and can potentially cooperate with MCs' agendas. However, all ACs can potentially become allies if the story happens to make that a reasonable and enjoyable outcome.

The Dark Sorceress

- + Mark an MC with some ominous sign of your interest and influence.
 - Endure, Brace, potentially Sneak or Persuade if being Marked might provoke other characters later.
- + Beset MCs with mindless minions.
 - Attack, Run, Endure.
- + Disable or claim a side-character with fell magic.
 - Possibly Focus to help the side-character, apply a Danger to later Actions.
- + Bewitch an MC with a status such as [drained], [confused], [pained], or as appropriate to weaken them.
 - Brace, Endure, Focus, apply Twists or possibly Challenges.
- + Take a marked or bewitched MC to your enchanted keep.
 - Run, Sneak, Brace, Endure, Attack, apply suitable Dangers while there.
- + Enact a dark ritual on an MC in your keep (status [enslaved], [transformed], [cursed], or similar).
 - Run, Sneak, Persuade, Brace, Endure, apply Twists and Challenges.
- Leave ominous portents of your malign influence where MCs will see them.
- Inspire terrified and despairing rumors among the peasants.
- Offer enticing bargains at terrible cost.
- Hint menacingly at your grand schemes.
- Leave an MC unsupervised while you prepare.
 - Sneak, Run, Pry, Attack.
- Postpone action 'until the time is right'.
 - Pry, Persuade, Attack, any other Action to use the time.
- Leave your most dangerous foes alive 'as an example'.
 - Pry, Persuade, apply Edges as appropriate.
- Leave your most powerful banes around to show your lack of fear.
 - Sneak, Pry, Persuade, Attack.

Note: the Dark Sorceress can serve as a more mundane charismatic leader, such as the head of a cult, or an abusive church. The primary purpose of a Dark Sorceress is to indirectly or implicitly menace MCs, without direct confrontation, and then to enact an inscrutable fate on them when the situation suits her.

The Dire Creature

- + Appear near an MC without warning.
 - Run, Attack, Endure.
- + Overpower a seemingly certain defense.
 - Run, Sneak, Endure.
- + Overwhelm and subdue an MC.
 - Endure, Run, Attack.
- + Carry an MC you've subdued to your lair (status [trapped]).
 - Attack, Sneak, Run.
- + Afflict an MC you've subdued with a status.
 - Endure, Brace, apply a lasting Danger as appropriate.
- + Suddenly claim a side character and do with them as you like.
 - Run, Attack, Endure, to try to fend off the creature.
- Make menacing sounds in the distance.
- Disturb natural flora and fauna in an uncanny manner.
- Provoke hushed whispers and downcast eyes from those who know of you.
- Cower from some specific, distinct implement of civilization (such as fire, light, silver, sudden loud noises, or otherwise).
 - Attack, Run, Focus, apply an Edge to other Actions.
- Lose pursuit of an MC, even when it should be easy to capture them.
 - Run, Sneak.
- Neutralize something else that threatened or pursued an MC.
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, possibly Persuade the neutralized threat, or apply an Edge.
- Reveal some vital secret about the land or a specific location, group, or person.
 - Pry, Persuade, apply an Edge to some other Action.

Note: more than other ACs, the Dire Creature needs specifics to suit personal taste. A patch of tentacle vines differs quite a lot from a werewolf, which differs from a wraith that inhabits the dead. A Dire Creature can even represent a human stalker, slasher, or pursuing brute. Adjust the Strong and Weak Actions to make them specific to the particular creature you have in mind, and especially name specific statuses your creature can impose, and banes that can defeat or drive it away.

The Dread Warlord

- + Breach a protected stronghold or keep.
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, Endure.
- + Loot and pillage a populous settlement.
 - Sneak, Run, Attack.
- + Claim the fair maidens/youths for your pleasure.
 - Persuade, Run or Sneak away a side character.
- + Seize the hardy maidens/youths as conscripts.
 - Persuade, Run or Sneak away a side character.
- + Best an MC in single combat (status [beaten]).
 - Attack, Endure, apply Dangers.
- + Capture an MC you've bested in combat (status [trapped]).
 - Sneak, Endure, Persuade a guardian.
- Announce the MCs' location as your next conquest.
- Challenge an MC to a 'fair' fight (or fuck), with yourself or a chosen champion.
- Display your captive 'trophies' for all to see.
- Let your warriors enjoy whichever 'trophies' you choose.
- Let a valuable captive loose, through arrogance, oversight, or fighting (or fucking) for their freedom.
 - Sneak, Run, Persuade, Attack with suitable Edges.
- Suffer massive losses through overconfidence, unpreparedness, or an underling challenging your power.
 - Attack, Sneak, Pry for future plans, with suitable Edges.
- Open the path or remove a barrier for the MCs, as you march to conquest.
 - Sneak, Run, Attack the vulnerable non-Warlord target.

Note: the Dread Warlord works for any antagonist consisting of a single powerful leader, whose power comes from a large number of underlings, and whose way of expressing power is brute force.

The Dungeon

- + Mob an MC with half-mad prisoners.
 - Attack, Run, Endure.
- + Degrade an MC with a few jaded guards.
 - Brace, Endure, Persuade, apply Dangers.
- + Debase an MC in the sight of a character they care about.
 - Brace, Endure, possibly Persuade the character later.
- + Inflict a newly-devised torment on an MC.
 - Brace, Endure, Persuade the tormentor, possibly apply a Twist.
- + Leave a side character broken, physically or mentally.
 - Focus to help the character, possibly Persuade the character or others later.
- + Offer a morsel or clean clothes or other pittance or real necessity, for a humiliating payment.
 - Brace, Persuade, apply Dangers.
- + Escalate an MC's status in the Countdown progression:
(none), [wavering], [humbled], [fearful], [terrified], [obedient], [broken]
 - Brace against the Countdown.
- + Afflict a different status on an MC (such as [sickly], [hobbled], [comedump], or as desired).
 - Brace, Endure, Persuade, as appropriate, or use the status as a Danger.
- Announce a new torment you have devised, in as little or much detail as desired.
- Circulate rumors among the prisoners and guards.
- Make a display of barbarity and cruelty.
- Show unshakeable solidarity and organization in the prisoners.
- Show gleeful corruption and vice in the guards.
- Give an MC a loyal contact.
 - Persuade, Pry, Focus to help, Edges from the contact's help.
- Fall for an obvious ruse or false compliance.
 - Persuade, Pry, Sneak, Attack or Run with an opportunity.
- Give an MC an opportunity they could never have outside: free an ally, assassinate or kidnap an important enemy here to gloat, a sample of blood for The Cure, or as appropriate.
 - Sneak, Pry, Persuade, as situationally appropriate.

Note: by design, the Dungeon supports medium- to long-term 'prison break' narratives (though the 'break' may well be the MCs' will). Consider giving any imprisoned MC the special Countdown: "progress toward escape", in which the player secures a phase of an escape plan. Decide in advance how many phases this should take for your tastes.

Note also the 'escalate status' Strong Action: by default, it has six steps, at which point an MC is 'broken', however you choose to interpret and roleplay it. You can remove steps to hasten this outcome or increase its urgency, and the Dungeon never *has* to use this Action. But keep the six steps in mind, for pacing any escape. The Dungeon has no way to *remove* progress at escaping, but can 'inflict new torments' and 'break side-characters' to interfere with escape plots as they progress.

In general, the Dungeon 'wants' to break MCs down, and reveal them at their worst. Accordingly, a Dungeon need not be a prison, and could even serve as a (dysfunctional and corrupt) mental institution far better than the 'Haunted Hospital', or serve as a town that has fallen to authoritarianism or to chaos.

The Fever Swamp

- + Obscure the path with twisting vines and swaying trees (status [lost]).
 - Brace, Endure bad conditions, Pry for threats, apply Dangers.
- + Afflict an MC with a deliriant toxin or unnerving illness (status [feverish] or similar).
 - Endure, Brace, apply Dangers.
- + Waylay an MC with restless spirits from the dark (status [haunted]).
 - Brace, Pry for intentions, Persuade, apply Dangers.
- + Take away an MC's belongings, with or without recovery (status [stripped]).
 - Brace or Endure to keep belongings, Focus to make do without.
- + Attack an MC with a wild, uncaring, unclean creature.
 - Run, Attack, Sneak, Endure.
- Sing incessantly with eerie beast, bird, and bug-song. Stop singing as a warning.
- Disgorge something that an MC has never seen before.
- Show who else was here, and might be still.
- Give an MC something useful and unique.
 - Pry, Attack to literally pry, Sneak or Focus.
- Provide safety from something outside of the swamp, such as neutralizing a threat.
 - Run, Sneak, Pry, Attack or Persuade with an opportunity.
- Provide tangible headway on an MC's goal, completing a phase or milestone.
 - Pry, Focus, or as applicable to the goal.
- Invigorate and revitalize an MC, and stir their desires.
 - Provide Edges to future Actions.

Note: the Fever Swamp can reflect many kinds of environments that inherently, passively resist or afflict MCs. 'Twisting vines' can instead be rippling mirages, and indeed a derelict spaceship would fit the Actions of the Fever Swamp beat for beat.

The Haunted Hospital

- + Lock an MC in the 'secure wing'.
 - Attack, Run, Sneak against barriers.
- + Deprive a character of the sense between lucidity and reality.
 - Brace, Pry, Focus for unfamiliar tasks.
- + The Nurses surround and accost an MC.
 - Attack, Run, Endure, possibly Brace against drugs or equivalent.
- + The Doctor restrains a subdued MC.
 - Attack the Doctor or restraints, Pry for a weakness to use later.
- + Perform a Procedure on a prepared MC.
 - Endure, Brace, apply Dangers.
- + Start the next phase of a previously completed Procedure.
 - Endure, Brace, apply Twists, advance a Countdown.
- + Activate or exploit a completed Procedure on an MC.
 - Brace, Endure, apply Twists or Challenges.
- Reveal a 'secure wing', a hidden layer, or alternate reality, where the true work of the facility takes place.
- Subdue a surrounded character, or prepare a restrained character.
- Mumble, chatter, babble, moan, or scream, openly or from locked rooms or around distant corners.
- Advise on courses of treatment for spurious ailments or deficiencies.
- Leave an MC or other patient unattended.
 - Sneak or Run another character away, or Pry or Persuade a character without rescue.
- Leave useful supplies or information out for the taking.
 - Sneak, Pry, apply Edges to later Actions.
- Remove a harmful status or condition, or apply a desirable one.
 - Alleviate Twists or Challenges, lower or remove a Countdown, apply Edges or possibly new Actions.
- Release a character from the 'secure wing' without warning or context.
 - Run, Sneak, Pry with newfound freedom.

Note: the Haunted Hospital can suit any narrative in which a *system* acts to confine, control, and corrupt the MCs. It can be a clinic, a secret lab, even an alien facility. With some adjustment it can serve well as a Dark Sorceress' 'enchanted keep'. Regardless of setting, however, the Hospital always has a purpose for its subjects, a 'sickness' to treat, or an 'ideal' to conform victims to.

The Procedures are unspecified, but should generally erode the MCs' ability to resist, or to function outside of whatever purpose the Hospital has for its subjects. They might involve physical punishment, drugs, shocks, surgery, or sorcery, but it always serves the purpose, stated above. Simple options would be 'submission and servitude', but could include 'conversion into another Nurse' (or some other creature), or could even involve direct control over an MC, making them part of the adversity.

Make sure to agree in advance on the kinds of Procedures involved, what statuses, Twists, and Challenges might reflect them, and especially, how many 'phases' before a Procedure is completed. The Strong Actions leading to Procedures all rely on a single Normal Action, and do not impose any statuses. This is intentional: the AC can choose to immediately secure a step toward a Procedure if desired, or can leave a step unresolved for the moment. Meanwhile, the MC can attempt to interrupt progress toward a Procedure, and if so, force the AC to start over. This allows a lot of flexibility for how certain an MC's corruption or doom should be.

The Hero

- + Contextualize an MC's past actions as evil (status [shamed]).
 - Persuade side characters, possibly with added Dangers.
- + 'Rescue' a side character from the MCs' clutches.
 - Attack, Persuade, Pry, depending on the method of 'rescue'.
- + Arrive where the MCs are headed in the nick of time.
 - Run, Sneak, Pry, Attack, depending on the Hero's agenda on arrival.
- + Match an MC in protracted combat, blow for blow, and ultimately defeat them.
 - Attack, Endure, Brace, apply Dangers and possible Twists.
- + 'Redeem' an MC into adopting an ethos that matches yours by overwhelming them with personal presence (status [swayed]).
 - Brace, Pry, Persuade, apply Twists or possibly Challenges of a moral-alignment nature.
- Pontificate about the nature of justice.
- Engage an MC in banter at an inopportune moment.
- Behave distractingly to try to steal the show.
- Voice spurious assumptions, and in doing so advance an MC's investigation of an event or subject.
 - Pry, Persuade, provide Edges.
- Cease hostilities to show genuine concern over a misfortune (having witnessed it before or close enough for them) and offer aid toward removing it.
 - Apply the Hero as an Edge toward future Actions as applicable.
- Fall to an underhanded joke of a tactic, ready to be pillaged for at least a few useful tools, a weapon, some coin, and a piece of information such as a map or letter.
 - Provide Edges for future Actions; the Hero might not even need Attacking.
- Attempt to redeem an MC by engaging in a moment of vulnerability, to your comical detriment.
 - Pry, Persuade, Attack with an opportunity.

Note: the Hero serves as something of a self-aware satire, for a self-aware story. It exhibits many stereotypical "RPG protagonist" foibles and follies, and may be most suited to 'isekai' or 'transplanted into a story' narratives, to oppose your true MCs.

The Hive

- + Lay bare an intimate secret belonging to an MC.
 - Persuade, Brace, apply Dangers to future Actions.
- + Lay bare an intimate secret belonging to a side character.
 - Brace, Persuade, Pry.
- + Incapacitate an MC with psychic trauma.
 - Brace, Focus for other tasks, apply Dangers.
- + Add an incapacitated MC to the hive (status [infested]).
 - Brace, Run, possibly Persuade against the Hive, apply Twists or possibly Challenges.
- + Reveal longstanding influence over a side character.
 - Brace, Persuade, Pry.
- + Blot an event from the memory of a group as big and chaotic as a dance floor or market square, and replace it with a vague alternate narrative.
 - Brace, Persuade, Pry, apply Dangers to social interactions.
- Cast out a tumultuous psychic tempest of accrued secrets, devoid of context.
- Gather mundane resources en masse: paper, cloth, bone, flowers, glass, whatever the hive needs.
- Drone audibly nearby despite an inclement condition.
- Incidentally expose a fundamental weakness in something an MC aims to destroy.
 - Pry, Persuade, Sneak, Focus with a plan, Attack with an opportunity.
- Compulsively mend something or someone important to an MC.
 - Alleviate statuses, Dangers, Twists, or possibly Challenges.
- Submit a hive-taken liaison to parley, laden with secrets the MCs aren't meant to know.
 - Pry, Persuade, provide Edges to later Actions.

Note: the Hive exists to disrupt and overturn an existing order or society with its own. While an alien, eldritch, or infernal hive-mind would clearly best fit the Hive, with some alteration this could also represent a zealous cult, or militant political group.

The Holy Ruins

- + Overwhelm an MC with sacred sights and mystery (status [awestruck]).
 - Brace, Pry, mental Dangers to disturbing the Ruins.
- + Impose a shocking spiritual epiphany on an MC (status [revealed]).
 - Brace, Pry, mental Dangers to some Actions outside the Ruins.
- + Shake an MC with how their life or nature is unfit for such glory (status [shamed]).
 - Brace, apply a Danger or even a Twist.
- + Entrap an MC in a compromising, perilous, merciless position.
 - Endure, Run, Focus, apply Dangers to wellbeing.
- + Unleash powerful and unwavering holy guardians to battle the MCs.
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, with appropriate Dangers.
- Gleam with ancient splendor and timeless majesty.
- Reveal the truth of the world in cryptic tableaux, inscribed parables, and sacred relics.
- Crumble, sag, and threaten to collapse at the slightest false step.
- Reveal a valuable relic that a side character would want.
 - Pry, Focus, or Sneak to acquire.
- Alleviate a harmful status from an MC.
 - Remove a Twist or reduce a Countdown.
- Provide an insight or revelation to aid an MC.
 - Provide Edges to later Actions.

Note: explicitly *holy* ruins presents interesting and nuanced directions of roleplay, but the Holy Ruins need very little adjustment to become Unholy, or unearthly and eldritch.

The Professor

- + Let an MC know they're under your 'tutelage'.
 - Pry, Persuade, possible Dangers to socializing with others.
- + Describe the stigma and adversity threatening your pupil (status [browbeaten]).
 - Brace, Pry, apply Dangers.
- + Describe the risk and hopelessness of failing academically (status [precarious]).
 - Pry, Persuade, apply Dangers later.
- + Describe your pupil's lack of learning and accomplishment (status [shamed]).
 - Pry, Persuade.
- + Threaten to dismiss your pupil (status [abandoned]).
 - Brace, Persuade.
- + Compel a pupil with two statuses to humiliating sexual use.
 - Brace, Focus (especially if compelling succeeds), mental Dangers or Twists.
- Pontificate your theories on the latest advancement of the field.
- Hold forth your own unique perspective on the fundamentals of your study.
- Complain about faculty gossip and interruptions to your research.
- Draw an extended barely-veiled analogy to sex in the presence of your pupil.
- Protect your pupil from a rival student.
 - Edge for Attacking or Enduring.
- Protect your pupil from a fellow teacher.
 - Edge for Prying or Persuading.
- Protect your pupil from a hostile faculty member.
 - Edge for Prying or Sneaking.
- Counsel your pupil to remove a status (especially one you didn't inflict).
 - Remove a Twist or reduce a Countdown.

The Town Square

- + Identify a character with a relevant status, to pursue, persecute, or similar.
 - Sneak, Persuade, apply Dangers to interactions.
- + Take something important from an MC, by guile or force.
 - Focus to keep attentive, Attack or Persuade.
- + Subtly remove or block an MC's means of escape.
 - Run, Sneak, Pry.
- + Surround and scrutinize a character and bait them into incriminating themselves.
 - Persuade, Sneak, Pry, apply Dangers later.
- Overcharge an MC for goods or services.
- Provide misleading or unhelpful answers to inquiries.
- Remark that an MC seems out of place.
- Allude to some pervasive threat that bears on an MC.
- Present a distraction or obstruction to a threat pursuing the MCs.
 - Run, Attack with an opportunity, Pry.
- Incidentally reveal information the MCs need.
 - Pry, provide Edges to later Actions.
- Introduce a side character who may sympathize with the MCs or their agenda.
 - Provide Edges to future Actions.

Note: the Town Square serves as a passively but pervasively hostile, yet civilized environment, suitable for scenes in which one or both MCs have a status like [traitor] or [wanted], or otherwise have reason to fear public persecution or victimization. It can also serve well for simple "unfriendly locals", when the MCs are unwelcome outsiders.

Although the Town Square does not present much *serious* adversity, its presence as a likely hub of activity amplifies the effect of even the Normal Actions, and the Strong Actions combine easily with the City Guard or the Unruly Mob.

The Underling/s

- + Use numbers, trickery, or an unexpected advantage to best an MC.
 - Attack, Endure, Run, make sure to dispose of at least one Underling if plural are present.
- + Manage to subdue or restrain an MC for the moment.
 - Endure, Brace against mental effects.
- + Call your superior or stronger forces after subduing or restraining an MC.
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, Pry or Persuade while the superior approaches.
- + Seize or reveal a side character or something an MC values, as a hostage or leverage.
 - Persuade, Run, Focus to help the side character.
- + Reveal that you were an Underling from the start, when you appeared to be a sympathetic side character.
 - Brace, Pry, Persuade.
- Gloat confidently about your success, potential reward, or what you'll do to an MC.
- Bicker with other Underlings about duties, the spoils, or blame.
- Ominously allude to what your superior can or will do, to an MC or yourself.
- Lose to an MC, incapacitated or killed.
 - Attack, provide Edges against Underlings.
- Drop something useful or valuable.
 - Provide Edges, Focus or Sneak to grab the dropped object if the Underlings are very attentive or if the superior is present.
- Reveal crucial information, by accident or under duress.
 - Pry, provide future Edges.
- Lose the MCs for a significant period of time.
 - Run, Sneak.

Note: many ACs have their own minions or servitors, and the Underling/s can serve as a default for such low-ranking and low-threat adversaries, especially if MCs will repeatedly interact with them (such as Haunted Hospital Nurses or Dark Sorceress Minions). The Underling/s can also serve as an independent minor threat, for MCs who have little power against direct confrontation with *serious* threats like a Dire Creature or Dread Warlord, but who might stand up against nameless goons. With some adjustment, a single recurring Underling could even instead serve as a competent rival to MCs, thwarting their goals and interfering with their plans, but never having any overwhelming advantage.

The Unruly Mob

- + Surround and attack an MC.
 - Attack, Run, Endure.
- + Subdue a surrounded character.
 - Endure.
- + Brutalize a subdued character (status [beaten] or as appropriate).
 - Brace, Endure, Persuade the Mob for mercy, apply Dangers for injury.
- + Carry a beaten character to public display or holding.
 - Brace, Endure, Persuade bystanders for lenience or aid.
- + Circumvent or overwhelm a barrier or defense.
 - Run, Sneak, Attack.

- Concentrate and rally forces to attack.
- Disperse and spread out to search for victims.
- Shout, chant, make demands, and brandish weapons.
- Injure or endanger a side character.

- Provide cover for something covert, dangerous, or illicit that the MCs wish to do or benefit from.
 - Sneak, Run, Pry, Persuade an intimidated character.
- Incidentally destroy an obstacle, place, or person that opposes the MCs.
 - Sneak, Run, Pry, Attack with an opportunity.
- Let an MC escape due to poor coordination.
 - Run, Sneak.

Note: the Unruly Mob has a fairly long progression before it can deliver decisive harm or incapacity to an MC. This is because *escaping* the Mob is often difficult, and the Mob can easily damage or destroy anything *besides* the MCs--which the Mob can use as leverage, especially when combined with the City Guard, Town Square, or even Dread Warlord, as the Mob could just as easily be a band of warriors.

Specific Guidance

The following short example of play will illustrate the normal flow of the game, with Alice and Betty, and their MCs, Ardella and Belial, respectively.

Alice and Betty first discuss and negotiate their desired kinks and sexual conduct, freely and openly. Both have an interest in demons and corruption, a shared distaste for pregnancy or animals, and while Alice is fond of men and women, Betty prefers to leave males out. Together they agree on what events and sex acts they're respectively willing to *receive* as well as what they're respectively willing to *give*.

With this discussion in mind, Alice creates Ardella, a scholarly priestess with Edges for 'Religious Faith', 'Noble Station', 'Curiouser and Curiouser', and 'Wiser Than She Seems'. Betty creates Belial, a traveling treasure-hunter with Edges for 'Widely Traveled', 'Influential Friends', 'Perfectly Legitimate', and 'Just Sneak In'. They both have an interest in the Dark Sorceress and the Holy Ruins (though they intend to make them *un*holy for their purposes). After some refinement and other general items they wish to include or avoid, Alice and Betty choose Alice to start narrating and setting the scene.

Alice describes Ardella teaming up with Belial, for help exploring the Unholy Ruins, fabled to house a Dark Sorceress, but to get there, the pair will need to traverse a Fever Swamp. Taking the chance to gossip about her wealthy and powerful 'Influential Friends', Belial quickly takes measure of Ardella's 'Noble Station'. Vice versa, Ardella's 'Religious Faith' inspires her to subtly test Belial's beliefs, and learn of her 'Widely Traveled' history--

Until Alice describes whispering, moaning specters rising from the mist, trying to tempt the adventurers from the path. This is a Strong Action from the Fever Swamp AC ('waylay an MC with restless spirits from the dark'). It recommends *Brace*, *Pry*, or *Persuade*, to apply Dangers, and to inflict the status [haunted] if the Action fails. Alice has trouble thinking of a good Danger, but Betty indicates Belial's 'Widely Traveled' and Ardella's 'Curiouser and Curiouser' might mean a weakness for "forbidden pleasures", such as these primordial wraiths promise. Alice agrees, and applies an additional Danger, simply "forbidden pleasures".

Betty describes Belial trying to *Brace*, and rolls three dice, one for the normal Goal (resist mental shock or psychic effects) and the normal Danger (needing mental recovery later), and the added Danger of "forbidden pleasures", a lingering fixation Belial will feel after leaving the Fever Swamp.

Betty's dice come up 6, 2, and 3. She didn't roll a die for any Edges to put the 2 into, which means it must go into a Goal or either Danger, earning her a GM Point. And Betty decides Belial might well take the enticements, over Ardella's protests, so Betty puts the 2 in her Goal, the 6 in 'mental recovery' (thus not needing any), and the 3 in "forbidden pleasures"--she might develop such a fixation later on, but it's uncertain for now. Betty describes Belial open and exposed to the lustful spirits, and Alice describes their taking advantage.

Alice decides this is a good time for the swamp to "take away a main character's belongings". She tells Betty to *Endure* the intangible hands pleasuring and violating her to keep hold of her pack, and to keep the "forbidden pleasures" Danger in effect, as titillation from being overwhelmed.

Betty rolls three dice again, 5, 2, and 4, with a Goal of keeping her pack, a Danger of being incapacitated, and the added Danger of a fixation on "forbidden pleasures". As much as Betty enjoys the specters' attentions, she'd rather not be incapacitated in the swamp with only the soft-featured Ardella and the malevolent spirits.

Betty assigns the 2 to keeping her pack (thus losing it), the 5 to remaining awake and able, and the 4 to her looming fixation, leaving it still unresolved. Belial now has the statuses [haunted] and [stripped], and has earned a second GM Point.

While the spirits have their way with Belial, Betty describes Belial babbling incoherently about misadventures in her 'Widely Traveled' past, protests that she didn't intend to rob any graves this time (inspired by 'Perfectly Legitimate'), and Alice adds Ardella's own frantic prayers, appropriate to her 'Religious Faith'.

Finally, the spirits finish with Belial and Ardella--and leave Belial with the status [lost], amid "twisting vines and swaying trees". This Strong Action requires *Bracing*, *Enduring*, or *Prying*, and Betty considers the latter most suited. She rolls 6, 1, and 2, but decides her Edge for 'Just Sneak In' might well apply to sneaking *out* of the haunted glen, so she rolls a fourth die afterward, getting a 5. Betty still has two 1-2 results and only the one Edge, so she gains a third GM Point, but she can finally assign a 5 to the "forbidden pleasures" and stop worrying about it, and 6 to successfully finding a way out of the swamp to the Unholy Ruins--though suffering some injury on the way, and unable to 'Just Sneak In' when she arrives.

Now that she has narration duties and Ardella and Belial have arrived at their destination, Betty opts to have the newly-found Unholy Ruins make a Weak Action: as soon as Ardella lays eyes on the crooked spires and canted walls, she knows it holds "an insight or revelation", if she mentally *Braces* for it.

Alice rolls for it, getting a 2 and a 5, and she assigns the 5 to her Goal, to receive this promised vision, at the cost of "mental recovery later". And Betty describes what Ardella sees:

The Ruins are actively *keeping* a demonic presence here, one strong enough that even the Dark Sorceress might well be fully under the control of demons--but, without the blasphemous temple, the infernal forces would descend back out of the world.

Alice takes this cue to suggest what she'd need to recover from: visions of the demons themselves, besetting her in her mind. And following Alice' earlier lead, Betty describes demonic visions and whisperings crashing in on Ardella's thoughts, accusing, taunting, and tempting her to debauched abandon. Alice takes a GM Point, and Betty describes the visions, interspersed with Belial's worried efforts to bring Ardella back to her senses.

Now, Betty's GM Points are cleared and Alice has one GM Point so far. Technically, Belial is still [lost] despite her navigating to the Ruins--but it would be less exciting to have her stumble through the Fever Swamp when more interesting things await at the Ruins. Her [lost] status can always give her trouble when Ardella and Belial leave the Ruins to return to civilization--if they make it that far. Belial is still [haunted] and [stripped] after all, and the two have only just come into view of the Ruins, and not yet even encountered the Dark Sorceress, or whatever other unholy things live within.

Alice and Betty will take turns narrating the world and playing as ACs opposing each other. If a scene or encounter reaches a conclusion naturally, it's a good time to switch who has narrative duties, but if no such occasion seems obvious, then Alice and Betty will alternate, based on the GM Points.

As to how to conclude a scene, the following suggestions give some good examples of when to skip forward in time, to another location, or to a different character as focus:

A sudden realization; news that encourages a main character to leave; a side character drawing an MC away; disappearance of an important object or character; escape of an antagonist; sudden injury or debility; securing safety or a temporary goal.

Twists, Challenges, and Countdowns

This section explains three mechanics that have gone unexamined until now, owing to the fact that a first session generally won't have use for them. Still, they use essentially the same mechanics already explained, but with specific emphasis in order to reflect a specific effect.

Twists

At heart, a Twist is just a Danger on an Action. What makes it a Twist is the fact that normally, the MC would never need to deal with it as a Danger, and now they do--possibly all the time. Twists fall into three broad categories, but they all work the same. The categories depend on "how bad an effect does it have" and "how often does it happen".

Minor Twists

A minor Twist only applies to a single Action, or can affect any Action but only under some narrow circumstances. It would have to have drastic effect before such a rare hindrance could be anything but 'minor'.

Examples:

- when you **Run** or **Attack** barehanded in the Pollinated Steam Grove, your faster breath gets you drugged by the pollen.
- when you **Attack** with a Haunted Sword, it's devastating, but you want to keep cutting.
- when you **Brace** while wearing the Dark Sorceress' armor, the messages to submit ring in your mind.

When to use: minor Twists reflect locational, circumstantial, or other situational risks or dangers as Dangers. Using risky artifacts or drugs, coping with environmental hazards, or the beginning stages of some corrupting influence, all work well with a Twist that adds some special Danger onto a normal Action until the condition no longer applies.

Moderate Twists

A moderate Twist affects several Actions (like physically involved things like **Run** and **Attack**, or mentally involved like **Persuade** or **Speak**), or the Twist comes up infrequently but has a very harsh effect. When it starts affecting a lot of Actions, or has a devastating effect when it happens, it's no longer just moderate.

Examples:

- when you do anything but **Brace** or **Run** in the slugsnake mating nest, a slugsnake can snare you.
- when you **Persuade** while wearing a Hospital collar, you instinctively want to offer your body to your persuade-ee.
- when you **Research** in the Holy Ruins, the dormant guardians can wake up and begin indoctrinating you immediately.

When to use: moderate Twists serve best for serious antagonists or resistance, effects from direct attacks designed to have such effect, or sunk-in and established corruptive effects. Usually a moderate Twist reflects "this is why this was a bad idea", or else "this is exactly why we have to fix this".

Anything that follows a character around and imposes a moderate Twist is probably a priority for them to **Craft**, **Research**, or just **Persuade** their way into fixing it . . . unless they start to like it.

Major Twists

Major Twists affect almost every Action with something minor but troublesome, or else affect several Actions with a very serious risk. A character dealing with a major Twist has probably either entirely fallen under hostile control (such as captivity or brainwashing), or soon on their way to being so (such as a parasite infestation or curse).

Examples:

- in the Dread Warlord's camp, any Action risks getting used by a soldier for her quick gratification.
- while wearing a Hive mask, doing anything but **Brace** risks locking you into that moment until you can free yourself.
- in the last stages of the infestation, **Running**, **Attacking**, or **Enduring** all risk tendrils emerging from you to lash you in place as an incubator.

When to use: major Twists work best at the end of the line, or--if your character can somehow turn it all around--the gripping climax to this arc of their story. In principle, an MC can carry on under the burden of a major Twist, but as you can see, it won't come easily. Have a new character in mind to play.

Twists as Injury

If you like playing rough, then ordinary injuries and sickness essentially constitute a Twist. Sprains, burns, fevers, can all work as minor Twists, if you could sleep it off or take a medicine for it. Maimed limbs, poisoning, or effects that will readily worsen if you don't keep them managed, make for decent moderate Twists. Punctures to vital organs, deadly toxins, or anything that you should treat with a tourniquet or gas mask just to stay alive, would be major Twists.

Challenges

While Twists represent some external factor simply hindering your normal Actions, a Challenge is a normal Action--except it covers doing something that should be automatic. Challenges are more nebulous than Twists in the sense that they don't so neatly sort by severity. However, all Challenges represent taking away something normal your character could do easily, and making it risky and uncertain.

Examples:

- whenever you're alone with someone, you have to **Brace** to avoid infecting them with the infestation.
- when you encounter any stranger, you have to **Persuade** them that the Dark Sorceress' brand you wear is harmless and you're not one of her spies. (Even if you really aren't.)
- when hobbled in the Dungeon, even staying on your feet or moving around constitutes a **Run** or **Endure**.
- after being declared a [traitor] by the City Guard, you have to **Sneak** anytime you go near the Town Square.
- after attending the Professor's 'lectures', you have to persuade yourself that the emotions you feel aren't from your newly-studied philosophy.
- after being broken in by the Dread Warlord, even asking a close friend to do something for you is **Attacking** as far as your mind is concerned.

When to use: Challenges generally result from some drastic or traumatic change or prolonged abuse or conditioning. In essence, something has crippled your character mentally or physically, compared to their normal abilities. And like with Twists, this can also represent mundane injury, such as having to **Run** in order to even crawl if you've lost a leg, or having to **Endure** against blood loss or pain.

In general, a Challenge can help you keep playing your character after what you might consider a Bad End, in which a story might normally leave your poor protagonist to their fate. Instead, by continuing to play your character, Challenges let you reflect why a story might fade to black, and also show off just why you won't. Whether your character finds a way to undo the damage, or simply finds a way to survive it, make sure you enjoy the story.

Countdowns

If you plan on a lot of different corrupting or transforming influences, you might need more structure to govern the MCs' degeneration, submission, or assimilation. Countdowns give a good way to model gradual, progressive, or other postponed or deferred consequences to immediate events, to pace out changes over plural sessions of play.

Countdowns all have the same basic structure:

- The 'type' of tick: winning rounds, buying time, or ironclad deadline
- How many ticks in total
- How much 'time' each tick represents
- What happens on each tick that passes
- What finally happens after the last tick

Type: a Countdown can have three basic 'end conditions':

- Rounds you can win: each tick of the Countdown prompts some kind of Action, with successful Actions adding up to a favorable resolution for whatever effect the Countdown represents, while failed Actions lead to some unfavorable outcome. Generally 'winning' a majority of these rounds should suffice, but you should still play the Countdown out to its conclusion, even if you've succeeded (or failed) at a majority of the ticks' Actions.
- Buying time: for an open-ended or at least variable condition, each tick of the Countdown prompts some Action, with success postponing the end of the Countdown, and failure usually prompting some worsening or degeneration of the condition. This suits well for corruption one can *fight against*, but which one can't *reverse* easily, though by buying time, an MC could pursue some difficult cure or reversal.
- Ironclad deadline: reserved for truly fateful conditions, the ticks of an ironclad deadline Countdown do not offer any reprieve, but instead serve for the MC to barely keep hold of themselves as the condition progresses. Counterintuitively, this also works well for *recovery* from an injury, whenever recuperation is assured but the process might be interesting to play out.

Number: a Countdown has some definite number of ticks, phases of its progression, after which the Countdown concludes. Consider the number of distinct phases or milestones that an MC's condition would present *if left unchecked*, and give an according number of ticks. Usually, six works well to start from.

Time: the amount of in-story time between ticks has enormous effect on the progression and feel of a Countdown. The shortest you could sensibly use is "each Action provokes a tick", for something covering mere minutes or an hour. Still extremely fast, "a tick happens after each scene" might represent a condition covering one night or a few days. More likely, you'll find use for "each in-story day" (or several days). You can also tie ticks to *events*, such as touching an artifact, encountering a cursed person, or even failing to Persuade, with each such (likely recurring) event provoking a tick on the Countdown.

Action: each tick of a Countdown provokes some kind of Action. Bracing against mental corruption or Enduring against physical changes make for good defaults, which cover most obvious or likely conditions for which you'd use a Countdown. However, you could use Persuade to represent a struggle against maddening, whispering spirits, or you might Attack your shadow as it slips the bonds of your feet each sunset. Any sort of Action can work, but decide what Action at the outset.

Outcome: every Countdown ends eventually. Define what happens after that *if left unchecked*. It might be "transformation into a creature", or "mindless servitude", or "hatch abominable spawn", or even "receive divine enlightenment". After the MC has done an Action for each elapsed tick, narrate this outcome, especially if as in 'winning rounds' the outcome would potentially vary.

Using the example of Belial's newly-awakened demonic heritage, Alice and Betty decide on *two* Countdowns to represent both her growing demonic nature, and her control over it. They want to make this a long-term arc of Belial's character, to see *how* she changes, as well as into *what*.

Belial's Corruption:

- The type is 'buying time': every tick, Belial can Focus with Ardella on stalling the descent with prayer.
- Belial has six ticks to start, but since she can buy time, this may give quite a lot of time.
- The Countdown progresses whenever Belial engages with a demon and fails an Action against that demon (but only once per such scene).
- On each tick, Belial feels her body flush with feverish heat, her head pounds with growing horns, and her rump twinges with a sprouting tail--though successful Focus can keep these traits from setting permanently.
- If Belial cannot purge her demonic corruption, she will fully become a demon in body, and will crave corruption and defilement in her soul.

Belial's Control:

- The type is 'winnable rounds': every tick, Belial can take any Action that preserves her sense of self and control in the moment.
- Belial has nine ticks, independent of her 'corruption' Countdown, but assumed to line up with its conclusion.
- The 'control' Countdown progresses each time the 'corruption' Countdown triggers, regardless of whether Belial succeeds or fails at postponing her descent into demonhood.
- On each tick, Belial feels a deep, pervasive desire to sink into sexual abandon.
- Failure at each Countdown Action causes Belial to devolve into a servile succubus, while success develops her into a more independent demon.

Combining these Countdowns, each time Belial confronts a demonic force or entity, she has to approach cautiously: if she makes an Action of any sort against the demon and places a 1-2 result into the Goal, she advances her 'corruption' Countdown, which also provokes her 'control' Countdown.

After the scene with the demon, Belial can Focus on prayer to stall her transformation, and can resist the temptation to become a servile succubus with *any* successful Action that reaffirms her sense of self-determination. Betty can play these scenes out after resolving the scene with the demon, which provoked both Countdown events, for easier narration and focus.

Belial's demonic transformation from the 'corruption' Countdown has *potentially* indefinite time before it completes, however if she does not stop or reverse the transformation, she has six failed Actions total, before the process completes. For the 'control' Countdown, Belial has nine incidents total, which may elapse before or after the 'corruption' Countdown concludes. If the 'control' Countdown outlasts the 'corruption', Belial will still resolve her ticks in the same fashion, after failing any Action against a demonic entity or force.

As Belial's Countdowns advance, she will take on more and more visible demonic and infernal features, as her 'corruption' proceeds; she can stall the process, but must pursue a plan to halt or reverse it completely. She will also feel more and more demonic impulses and desires: failing at Actions will make her more docile and fixated exclusively on sex, while success will at least allow her to channel her demonic development into wrath, or manipulation, or greed instead.

Alice and Betty decide on the best way to reflect these changes, should Belial succumb to her corruption or fail to control herself: first, for the 'corruption', a Twist when Sneaking or Persuading, a pervasive demonic aura that others can sense; if the 'corruption' completes fully, a Challenge to hide her demonic nature when interacting with mortals.

Secondly, a Twist for every three Actions on which Belial fails when trying to fight her 'control' Countdown, representing a desire and need to let her awareness slip away. If she instead has any three Actions of the same type succeed (eg Attacking), the Twist reflects a different demonic impulse (such as rage or cruelty, for Attacking to keep her sense of self).

Modifications

Into the Peril lends itself well to optional rules and additional systems. The following sections will list some ways to adjust the rules, and approaches to using Actions and ACs, as well as alterations you can make to MCs to support different styles of play.

The GM Point system presents an obvious starting point for modification. To save some statistical analysis, a player can expect slightly less than six Actions before reaching three GM Points, give or take two, under most circumstances, and with occasional outliers of a ten or eleven Action streak before hitting three GM Points. Directly reducing or increasing the GM Point threshold obviously will shorten or lengthen the *average* rate of alternation. More interestingly, you can alter the conditions for earning a GM Point in the first place:

If players only earn GM Points by placing a 1-2 into Goals (not Dangers), this will reduce the rate at which one earns GM Points drastically, at the cost of 'playing dangerous', favoring one's dice toward success and also toward costs, complications, and consequences.

Conversely, earning a GM Point only by placing 1-2 results into Dangers, with no effect for failing at Goals, encourages a reserved play-style in which your MC has frequent setbacks and obstacles, but few serious *costs* to their failures.

You can even apply incentives to having GM Points, such as 'reserve' Edges for MCs which the player can only use if they have two GM Points. Indeed by the logic of escalating stakes and tension, having a 'reserve' Action which the MC can use only after suffering setbacks may well prove suitable.

New Actions

Speaking of new Actions, the standard Actions of *Into the Peril* suit pulp action and adventure, and adjacent genre tropes, but have little support for nuanced social conflict, delicate intrigue, or unique phenomena of a distinctive setting. This section presents a few example Actions you can use directly, or as templates to supplement or replace the core Actions:

Pull Favor: when you ply a loyal peer in a group you belong to, remind a superior of your great potential, or press an inferior to your bidding. The Goal is to gain an Edge of useful information or secrets, a valuable device, or the benefit of some rare phenomenon. The Danger is taking on a duty imposed by your benefactor.

Pull Favor differs from Persuade in that the benefit acts as an Edge, and Pull Favor represents having allies who provide such aid. You may Pull Favor at any time, with anyone suitable (including persons not yet named in your story), for any sort of benefit you can describe.

Travel: when you hike through the jungles or trudge through the wastes to get to a specific place. The Goal and Danger work differently:

- The Goal is your speed of travel, you may get to your destination in:
1-2: several days' time; 3-4: under a day; 5-6: a few hours' trip.
- The Danger is your relative safety in your travels, which may hassle you with:
1-2: a nasty encounter; 3-4: weather, damage, or lingering risk; 5-6: nothing but smooth progress.

You always eventually reach your destination, and your mishap does not bring Danger dice onto your next Actions, but can say what kind of state you're in when you arrive. You should only detour your trip into a messy encounter if that kind of side-quest seems like fun!

Charm: the Goal is to put someone at ease, make them like you and feel comfortable, and generally have someone enjoy themselves. The Danger is they keep you tied up and insist on your company, or you also attract attention from someone you didn't intend.

While the usual Persuade can approximate these effects, it has a much broader Danger, less specific to social relations and to *emotional* rather than *practical* persuasion. Persuade asks someone to *do something* for you, and assumes they want you to do something for them; Charm asks someone to *feel something* for you, and makes that feeling potentially more complicated than you would want.

Hack: the Goal is to circumvent or defeat a security measure, grant access to a system, or control a device or machine. The Danger is damaging the function of the device, alerting security personnel, or triggering a (delayed) self-destruct feature.

Although Focus provides a very broad and generic Action you can use if nothing else quite fits, the other Actions show that *having* a defined and explicit Action goes a long way. For sci-fi and technologically-advanced settings, Hack can make a useful elective, or even *standard* Action.

Dark Bargain: the Goal is to open yourself to insidious, malevolent, or inhuman powers in order to borrow their strength for your ends. The Danger is that while controlling you, those powers will claim or destroy something you care about.

Much like Attack, this Action presents a way to solve problems at a risk of losing or destroying something. However, the 'inhuman powers' provides far more narrative license, depending on the source. For example, drinking vampiric blood might provide healing or inhuman strength; carrying living shadows might allow for intangibility or teleportation; feral, cunning creatures might lend their aid but ransack at the first chance; wild fae enchantment might allow almost anything at a terrible price.

Adding Adversity Characters

The selection of ACs provided tries to give a good variety of possible encounters, and a lot of flexibility. But this means most ACs require some customization, and if you have a very particular idea or plan for an encounter or your story as a whole, you may need to create ACs from scratch.

Firstly, keep in mind that *any* form of adversity can make for an AC: a swamp, a town, a dungeon, a group of thugs, all examples already given in this book. By simply packaging a selection of Strong Actions that harm, hinder, or degrade the MCs, Normal Actions that give character and mood, and Weak Actions that grant the MCs a benefit or reprieve, you have an AC.

Secondly, to make an *effective* AC, try to keep to a small, simple, coherent theme or modus operandi. While you *can* create an AC that simply bundles together "everything good or bad that could happen to MCs in this story", you'll likely find more use from "an AC for a dangerous area", "an AC for a recurring enemy", and possibly "an AC for some harmful condition". That way, both players can keep a specific AC in mind as a character, an entity that takes action against the MCs, whose limitations you can plan and predict, and whose agenda you can think of in simple, straightforward terms.

Thirdly, to make a *good* AC, consider how it can interact with existing ACs. Some ACs can only harm or hinder MCs in a particular way (such as The Professor only acting on psychology, or The Dire Creature only attacking physically). Some ACs impose and act on a list of statuses, while others ignore statuses entirely. And several ACs can even directly attack or disable other ACs (such as the Fever Swamp, which could both unleash, and neutralize a Dire Creature).

As an example, the Holy Ruins gives some good general patterns to follow:

The Holy Ruins

The title should hopefully give a sense of the AC's theme.

- + Overwhelm an MC with sacred sights and mystery (status [awestruck]).
 - **Brace**, **Pry**, mental Dangers to disturbing the Ruins.
- + Impose a shocking spiritual epiphany on an MC (status [revealed]).
 - **Brace**, **Pry**, mental dangers to some Actions outside the Ruins.
- + Shake an MC with how their life or nature is unfit for such glory (status [shamed]).
 - **Brace**, apply a Danger or even a Twist.

List the AC's 'preferred' attacks or adversity first. These are the main means by which the AC harms or hinders MCs.

- + Entrap an MC in a compromising, perilous, merciless position.
 - **Endure**, **Run**, **Focus**, apply Dangers to wellbeing.
- + Unleash powerful and unwavering holy guardians to battle the MCs.
 - **Attack**, **Run**, **Speak**, with appropriate Dangers.

More severe or situational Strong Actions should still fit the theme or modus operandi that the 'common' Strong Actions establish.

Other ACs with even more punishing or potentially final Strong Actions usually depend on making preparatory Strong Actions (such as the Dark Sorceress having to mark or enchant someone before taking them to her keep, and having to have someone in her keep before performing a ritual on them). This gives the severe Strong Actions a suitable sense of weight and scale, and also allows the player targeted by them to prevent (or savor) the most serious 'attacks'.

- Gleam with ancient splendor and timeless majesty.
- Reveal the truth of the world in cryptic tableaux, inscribed parables, and sacred relics.
- Crumble, sag, and threaten to collapse at the slightest false step.

Normal Actions help to set the tone and mood, help establish Dangers, and allow the player narrating the AC to 'do something' through the AC, without always involving meaningful stakes.

- Reveal a valuable relic that a side character would want.
 - **Pry**, **Focus**, or **Speak** to acquire.
- Alleviate a harmful status from an MC.
 - Remove a Twist or reduce a Countdown.
- Provide an insight or revelation to aid an MC.
 - Provide Edges to later Actions.

Like Strong and Normal Actions, Weak Actions should suit the AC's overarching theme. Further, they should always at least represent a loss of power, or lapse in hostility, for the AC. Weak Actions can even present expressly positive outcomes for MCs.

The Holy Ruins fit a general fantasy or pulp premise of an ancient and remote location where MCs might visit for treasure, knowledge, or healing. Indeed, notice it features an inherent reason that an MC would *want* to go here, amid the many reasons not to. While the Holy Ruins don't directly interact with any other ACs (such as the Fever Swamp and Dire Creature do), the Holy Ruins has the uncommon trait of *removing* statuses. Combined with a Fever Swamp, Underlings, and possibly under the rule of a Dark (or Light) Sorceress, the Holy Ruins can make for a rich and varied site for a single adventure, especially one of the 'dungeon delving' genre.

The Holy Ruins embody the theme of an ancient site filled with danger and revelation. It represents a place the MCs would likely want to go intentionally, to learn or to acquire some benefit. As a character, it 'wants' to overwhelm and inspire MCs, to strike them with awe and make them humble, to punish their arrogance or sense of self, and it may well collapse at any moment--or at least, the part that the MCs happen to stand on or lean against at the moment.

Keep this notion of a 'want' in mind for all ACs you create. On one hand, you can use this to simplify design, having Strong Actions that secure what the AC wants from MCs and Weak Actions that instead give MCs what *they* want; on the other, as with the Holy Ruins, you can have *every* Action reflect what the AC 'wants', but give the AC complex or contradictory wants, such as a 'want' to inspire awe, and a 'want' to decay into rubble (and endanger intruders in the process).

Advanced Actions

Actions operate on a very basic principle: MCs use Actions to solve problems, Dangers bring problems onto MCs; ACs use Strong Actions to harm or hinder MCs, and Weak Actions help MCs. Ultimately all Actions place MCs at the center of the universe, and ACs simply give a source of Actions outside of the MCs' own initiative. This section will explore what else Actions can do and reflect.

More Power

You can give MCs new Actions to reflect a new ability, power, or resource they gain during the story. As an example, if Ardella gains favor and influence with a powerful family, Alice could reflect this with an Action for requesting their assistance, with a Danger of owing them an inconvenient favor. As the story progresses, this Action could branch into an Edge, such as simply *referencing* Ardella's powerful allies in order to Persuade or intimidate (*Attack*) others.

Alternately, an MC can counterintuitively become more powerful by what their Actions *do not* cover: an Action reflects taking some uncertain, risky, or costly effort, and if a specific kind of effort has *no* risk of failure or cost for trying, it no longer qualifies as an Action.

As an example of this, Belial discovers she has a demonic lineage, awakened through events in the story. Initially, this manifests as a revision to *Pry*: Belial can always sense corruption, without needing any Action to do so.

And if Betty pursues Belial's demonic awakening, eventually a new Action might well reflect growing demonic power--but even adding in an Edge, such as "seductive wiles" or "casual disrobing" would also serve well to reflect a progression.

More Hardship

On the converse, MCs could lose abilities and gain weaknesses, from their encounters with ACs. As a simple example, Ardella might lose her priestly 'Religious Faith' Edge from her entanglement with that powerful family whose influence she uses. Indeed, if she persists in her shift of loyalty, she might well gain a *Challenge*: "Brace to defy the will of your backers". This would make a new Action into a *weakness* for Ardella.

As a more complex example, Belial's awakened demonic heritage may weaken her more than benefit her. Normally, a lasting risk or hindrance would take the form of a Twist, a persistent Danger that applies to one or more Actions whenever a certain recurring condition holds. However, instead Alice and Betty can *rewrite* the normal Dangers for Actions Belial takes. Instead of having a third die to roll, Belial simply always has a risk of "earning the ire, outrage, or terror of locals" and "falling victim to the lusts of a creature". If Belial doesn't nurture any demonic *strengths* as time goes on, then her corrupted aura will only increase, sparking outrage, lust, and fear wherever she goes.

Advanced Adversity

The ACs included for use in Into the Peril have a deliberately simple design for easy, flexible use. Expanding on these designs allows much broader mechanical representation for a greater variety of concepts. Returning to the Holy Ruins, several alterations would enhance it from a simple location to visit, into a fuller setting for continuing encounters.

The Temple Ruins

- + Overwhelm an MC with sacred sights and mystery (status [awestruck]). **This includes the Temple's Demands.**
 - Brace, Pry, mental Dangers to disturbing the Ruins.
- + Impose a shocking spiritual epiphany on an MC (status [revealed]). **This includes revealing a Temple Precept.**
 - Brace, Pry, mental Dangers to some Actions outside the Ruins.
- + Shake an MC with how their life or nature is unfit for such glory (status [shamed]). **This includes a quest for redemption or betterment.**
 - Brace, apply a Danger or even a Twist.
- + Entrap an MC in a compromising, perilous, merciless position.
 - Endure, Run, Focus, apply Dangers to wellbeing.
- + Unleash powerful and unwavering holy guardians to battle the MCs. **Guards will not attack the [awestruck] or [shamed] or while the Ruins are [peaceful].**
 - Attack, Run, Sneak, with appropriate Dangers.
- + **Only after a Weak Action: advance an MC along the progression: (none), [aware], [attentive], [fixated], [swayed], [enthralled], [obedient]**
 - Brace to resist, Pry to sense it happening beforehand, Focus on a different agenda.
- + **Only after a Weak Action: suggest ([swayed]), command ([enthralled]), or compel ([obedient]) an MC to your precepts.**
 - Brace to resist, Pry to sense it happening beforehand, Focus on reversing the progression.

- Glean with ancient splendor and timeless majesty. **Prompt an MC to muse on the Temple's Demands.**
- Reveal the truth of the world in cryptic tableaux, inscribed parables, and sacred relics. **Prompt an MC to meditate on a Temple Precept.**
- Crumble, sag, and threaten to collapse at the slightest false step.
- **Subtly show favor to the most faithful: bugs don't bite, thorns don't scratch, rain doesn't fall on those who listen to the Ruins.**

- Reveal a valuable relic that a ^{side} character would want. **It is not easy to attain, but suggest how to start.**
 - Pry, Focus, or Sneak to acquire.
- Alleviate a harmful status from an MC. **This can include illness and injury.**
 - Remove a Twist or reduce a Countdown.
- Provide an insight or revelation to aid an MC. **This can include anything the MC might benefit from knowing or suspecting.**
 - Provide Edges to later Actions.
- **Become [peaceful] through supplication; this lasts until an MC knowingly violates a Temple Precept.**
 - Persuade, Focus, Brace or Endure for a ritual.
- **Sustain a status from an MC's communion.**
 - Persuade, Focus, Brace or Endure for a ritual.
- **Become [defiled] through breached Precepts by an MC, or aggressive action from impure side characters (including ACs). While [defiled], give no blessings or benefits to those in the Ruins.**
 - Rectify the [defiled] status through undoing whatever caused it, through Craft or Research, or through Focus.

This expanded version of the Holy Ruins features six new Actions, supporting more long-term involvement from MCs and more focus on the Ruins as a setting. Now a fully-fledged temple complex, the MCs have much more to interact with, and the Ruins has more it can do to its new occupants.

Notice that most of the changes only amplify on existing Actions, and give guidance on how to use those Actions to support the agenda and overarching story centered on the Temple Ruins: now the Temple has 'Demands' and 'Precepts', which MCs can learn and abide by or violate as an ongoing feature of the story. In particular, the 'holy guardians' now have predictable limitations on whom and when they can attack, which binds the Temple Ruins in a kind of covenant with MCs.

Further limiting the Temple Ruins, a new kind of Strong Action depends on the AC making a *Weak Action* first. Normally, an AC may make any of its Actions at any time, and indeed an AC need not ever give the benefits of a Weak Action to MCs. But two of the Temple Ruins' Strong Actions make this explicit: in order to 'advance the progression' or 'suggest command or compel' an MC, the Temple Ruins *must* first make a Weak Action (all of which benefit the MCs or their broader goals). The Temple Ruins has to play along with the MCs before it can impose its most serious Strong Actions on them.

The Temple Ruins' Normal Actions no longer only convey the theme and agenda of the Ruins: they expressly prompt the player of an MC to give feedback and commentary, making the Temple's unstated 'Demands' and 'Precepts' not only more personal, but more prominent in the story. Discovering and negotiating these demands and precepts as MCs can now comprise a significant part of the narrative. This also goes to show that while Normal Actions don't involve dice, they can bear on any other Action where appropriate (such as the more explicit example of the Haunted Hospital, whose worst Strong Actions depend on a single Normal Action).

And while other ACs have Weak Actions that make the AC less hostile or dangerous, or remove the AC's threat altogether, the Temple Ruins features Weak Actions that both expressly subject it to MCs' will and agenda, and make it vulnerable to *other characters*. Indeed, the last Weak Action gives MCs an incentive to *protect* the Temple Ruins from outside threats, and thus indirectly suggests such threats as a feature in the story. In ensemble, this complicated combination of Actions and the agendas they explicitly and implicitly embody make the Temple Ruins much more like an MC than any other AC. But, the Temple Ruins still functions like an AC, providing adversity and conflict for MCs, presenting challenges and obstacles and drama, even pitting MCs against one another, and requiring MCs to take action in the story.

Example Powers

Perform a Ritual: you may sacrifice a creature or part of yourself, paint runes or sigils in a location, concoct an alchemical potion, or invoke deities, spirits, demons, or other forces. You can accomplish any task you can name, if you succeed under all conditions.

Danger: nonstandard, the value of the die you assign to Danger represents how many of the following requirements you can ignore for your ritual:

- it's very, very time-consuming to perform
- it's very, very slow to take effect
- it will require serious danger to you
- it will harm or endanger someone you care about
- it requires extremely rare ingredients you don't have
- it will leave a permanent effect on you other than harm
- it will come with a complication other than failure which you must address when it occurs.

This Action gives a basic framework for performing magic and using the supernatural. Performing a ritual expressly lacks any limits on what it can do. All of the Danger options are intended as fodder for drama and action, and by themselves provide things to do in your game, in essence becoming a small quest or arc of their own.

Enchant an object, place, or person with sorcery: you might anoint it with your blood, cut a series of runes into its surface, or tie a lock of your hair around it. Anyone using the object, occupying the place, or personally having this enchantment may increase the Goal or Danger of their Actions by one, chosen by you at the time of enchantment. Your Goal die determines how many kinds of Moves this benefit applies to (one, two, or three), also chosen by you during enchantment. You may only enchant one thing, place, or person in this way at a time.

Danger: nonstandard:

- 1-2: you need an entire scene to perform the enchantment
- 3-4: you need considerable time during a scene, but finish the enchantment before the scene concludes
- 5-6: you finish your enchantment in only a few moments.

You may always abandon your work.

Like performing a ritual, you can use this to give a system for freeform magic, in order to have more codified, tangible sorcery in your game. Unlike many Actions, enchanting carries with it no real risk of failure; instead, it always succeeds, but will have uncertain effect, and may take time you don't want to spend.

Seal a pact with a power that is bound by its words, such as signing a contract with a devil, trading a promise with the fae, binding a djinn, or making some even stranger arrangement. The Goal die determines how many of the following will apply to your boon:

- clean: without any harmful consequences
- quiet: without anyone learning of it
- fair: construed or interpreted not merely 'to the letter', but 'to your best interests'
- immediate: occurring exactly when you wish
- enduring: rather than a one-time favor
- abundant: rather than benefiting only yourself

Danger: nonstandard, the Danger die indicates how many of the following terms you may remove from your end of the contract:

- compulsion: the contract represents a Danger when you act in bad faith
- duration: your end of the bargain will last months or years
- burdensome: you must do something despicable
- continuity: you must undertake ongoing action to keep your word
- ruthlessness: breach of the terms will bring danger to others
- penalty: breach of your terms will bring the full fury your contract holder can pit against you
- precision: your terms have absolutely no loopholes, whatsoever

While performing a ritual may allow any effect whatsoever, it carries a high uncertainty of working, with potentially very burdensome requirements to meet upfront. By contrast, when you bargain, you always enjoy some benefit, and face 'requirements' only later.

Virtuoso: through lost techniques and secret traditions, you practice a form of art that evokes fire from dancing, crumbles walls through singing, creates life from stone, or conjures floods from a painting. The Danger is that you (or someone else) must **Craft** more materials for any future works, or **Research** for another burst of inspiration.

Sorcery through **Virtuoso** aims for a more personal, dramatic, and focused feeling than the transactional and unconstrained magical variants above. In particular, a character who uses **Virtuoso** artistry likely does not have skill in *every* art or medium, which encourages specifying what sorcerous dancing can accomplish, or what *kind* of life emerges from stone. As another distinction, the Danger affects only whether you can use **Virtuoso** again later on.

Dreamscape: when a subject is unconscious (naturally or otherwise), you and potentially others can enter that subject's mental landscape, to search for secrets, impart desires or compulsions, or rectify harm. The Danger is that hostile and willful facets of their mind will attack you for intruding.

While **Dreamscape** by itself does not solve any particular problem, it opens a new arena in which to encounter and solve problems, on the way toward a distinctive means of accomplishing long-term agendas. Instead of bluntly **Persuading** a character, you can manipulate their inner world without their awareness, as well as convey information in a way no one else can intercept.

Restoration: when you have time alone with someone, you can restore their health and heal their ills. For an MC, this can remove any single status on a 3-4 result, or reduce a Countdown; this can remove two statuses or two steps of a Countdown on a 5-6 result. For side characters, any ailment will begin to recover, and will eventually fully recover with a 5-6 result. The Danger is gaining the status [drained] which applies a Danger to any Action of passing out.

Although **Focus** or **Research** can sometimes suffice in a catch-all fashion for healing or treatment of other characters, **Restoration** makes it a simple and defined Action, implicitly one you can do at any time, and without significant delay or preparation.

Invasion: you can bring familiars from your home into any scene, without warning or preparation. The Goal is nonstandard, the value you assign to it determines the result:

1. Not much of a friend. They get two from the #4 list and they don't like you.
2. Not much of a familiar. Whether they like you or not, they can take no Actions on your behalf and disappear almost as soon as they appear.
3. Not much help. They like you fine, but can only make one Action on your behalf. You roll for it but don't suffer from any Danger that ensues.
4. A raiding party. Choose one: they can do up to four Actions per #3; they can suffer injuries on your behalf; they can remain till the end of the scene after this one; gain two Edges reflecting your home invading this location.
5. An invasion. Choose two from #4, or: you don't summon anyone, instead gain two Edges reflecting your home, and two suitable Actions simply succeed automatically.
6. An annex. Choose two from #4, or: they abduct everyone to your home for the rest of this scene.

The Danger is your continued hold on this realm: gain the status [wavering], and advance all Countdowns you currently have by one tick.

This power suits a being from another world or plane of existence, or who has control over a pocket-dimension or parallel reality. However, it could reflect a character with access to some form of more mundane lair, filled with familiars, spawn, or lackeys. Unlike **Command** however, **Invasion** can expressly backfire and create a *hostile* character, and poses a very serious risk when used.

Transmigrate: if you can maintain close eye-contact for as much as a minute, you can exchange your mind into the body of another. The Goal is nonstandard, the value you assign to it determines the result:

1. You remain in your current body, which falls unconscious.
2. You remain in your current body, with the status [drained].
3. You migrate to the new body, which falls unconscious and awakens [drained].
4. Choose one: control your new body (using Actions) quickly; its owner is unconscious (or otherwise conveniently pliant); you retain some control of your old body.
5. Choose two from #4.
6. Choose two from #4, and gain a temporary Edge appropriate to the new body.

The Danger is the fate of your old body: its new occupant may wander off, injure themselves, or your old body may simply lose its animating force.

While exchanging bodies through **Transmigration** isn't certain or safe, it presents a powerful way to evade many statuses and even Countdowns--though by no means all of them.